Greening Government

FEDERAL FACILITIES DEMONSTRATE SOLAR POWER, ENERGY EFFICIENCY

EPA's Enviro$ense and EnergyStar Programs Help Consumers Save Money And Power

In April 2000, EPA, the Department of Energy (DOE), and the General Services Administration (GSA) awarded 27 federal offices and employees for clean energy innovations in EPA's Pacific Southwest Region. Their achievements included installation of solar power and solar heating equipment, and energy efficiency upgrades at military bases, national parks, and federal agency buildings.

Winners included the U.S. Navy's three 225-kilowatt (kw) wind turbines and a 675-kw wind/diesel hybrid energy system on San Clemente Island, California; the National Weather Service's new Forecast Office in Guam, which features solar water heating, recycled building materials, and energy-efficient lighting, heating, and air conditioning; and the National Park Service's Golden Gate National Recreation Area, with a 4-kw photovoltaic generating system (see photo above)—the initial installment of a planned 85-kw photovoltaic array—plus 19 clean natural gas-fueled vehicles, a natural gas fueling station, electric scooters, and energy-efficient lighting.

EPA has been working with federal facilities throughout the nation since the 1980s not only to ensure that they comply with federal environmental laws, but to show how they can save money and protect the environment in their routine operations. Typical actions include recycling waste, purchasing products made from recycled materials, upgrading buildings to save energy, and finding alternatives to toxic solvents.

Details on these and hundreds more cost-saving ideas for government agencies, businesses, schools, and other institutions are posted on EPA's Enviro$ense Web site, at ***www.epa.gov/envirosense***

For consumer information on the vast array of energy-saving home appliances, office equipment, lights, heating and cooling systems, and other products, search EPA's EnergyStar Web site, ***www.energystar.gov***

EPA'S RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA, LABORATORY

EPA's laboratory in Richmond, California, which opened in 1999, became the first federal government building in the nation to be entirely powered by renewable energy. The facility – which houses 50 scientists specializing in chemical and biological analysis and field sampling – is powered entirely on electricity generated by burning methane extracted from rotting garbage in a landfill. This substitution of "green power" instead of power generated by burning fossil fuels **reduces carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 2.3 million pounds per year.**

In addition to their regular duties, lab employees also participate in the community in many ways, ranging from analyzing creek samples taken by local watershed volunteers to inviting local high school students to tour the lab and learn about environmental careers. Lab workers also regularly analyze air samples provided by "Bucket Brigade" volunteers living near oil refineries and chemical plants in **Contra Costa County.** These volunteers, in a program started with EPA assistance, keep an air sampling device in their homes, ready to use whenever they smell smoke or chemicals. The sealed samples are then brought to the lab for analysis, where they may provide evidence of illegal toxic emissions.

EPA REVIEW SAVES NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL SITE

Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, federal agencies must prepare Environmental Impact Statements before they take any action that has a significant environmental impact. This includes the issuance of mining and other land use permits by agencies which manage federal lands, such as the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It is EPA's responsibility to review and comment on these documents.

Last year, an EPA review of a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Glamis Imperial Corp. open-pit gold mine, which would have destroyed portions of a Native American cultural site, was instrumental in the BLM's decision to reject the proposal.

The proposed gold mine would have occupied about 2.5 square miles of public land in the Mojave Desert. The mine would have excavated up to 450 million tons of ore and waste rock from two open pits.

The Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation found that the proposed mine would do irreparable damage to **Quechan tribe cultural sites in the Indian Pass-Running Man Area in Imperial County.** EPA cited the proposed mine's damage to 77 acres of seasonal wetlands, as well as Native American cultural and sacred sites, and fossil sites. In response to the EPA review and comments from the tribe, the Advisory Council, and the public, the BLM denied the permit.

EPA INDIAN PROGRAMS

EPA's Pacific Southwest Region includes 145 federally-recognized tribes and **nearly 50% of the Indian lands in the United States.** One hundred and twenty-three of these tribes were developing environmental regulatory programs in 2000. Over half of these tribes have conducted basic environmental assessments of their lands—the first step in development of comprehensive programs. Many tribes have gone further. For example, last year the **Navajo Nation** became the first tribe in the country to receive EPA authorization for a Public Water Supply Supervision Program. In addition, EPA last year selected **Arizona's Gila River Indian Community** as a "Brownfields Showcase Community" with which EPA will work cooperatively to catalyze the cleanup and reuse of lightly contaminated properties.

EPA Assists Tribes With Water Systems, Dump Closures

Nationwide, over 20,000 reservation homes lack running water. Last year, EPA's Pacific Southwest Region provided over $13 million for construction or repair of 16 drinking water systems on reservation lands. EPA also provides funding for construction of wastewater facilities for Indian tribes, in a program administered in partnership with the Indian Health Service (IHS). In 2000, EPA awarded grants for 14 tribal sewage treatment improvement projects.

Open garbage dumps on Indian lands are often sources of air and water pollution. In 2000, EPA's Pacific Southwest office provided **funding and technical assistance to close 23 open dumps:** 12 on Navajo lands (five at Tonali Lake and seven in Leupp), three in California (at the Tuolumne, Santa Rosa and X-L Rancherias); seven on the Walker and one on the Duckwater Reservation in Nevada. EPA also helped the **Havasupai of the Grand Canyon area** bring their solid waste landfill up to federal standards for preventing pollution. The tribes, EPA, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Indian Health Service worked cooperatively on these projects.

CLANCY TENLEY

In 2000, EPA's Pacific Southwest Office awarded grants for 14 tribal sewage treatment improvement projects, like this one at the Cocopah Reservation in Arizona. ***Photo on page 29:*** *This photovoltaic system generates electric power at the Presidio in San Francisco, California. Photo by David D. Schmidt*

EPA GRANTS: FUNDING STATE AND LOCAL INITIATIVES

More than half of the EPA Pacific Southwest office's annual budget goes to grants and funding for state and local environmental programs through cooperative agreements. At any given time, there are **over a thousand EPA grant-funded projects underway in this region alone.** Some of these grants provide annual funding to EPA's partner state agencies, which develop their own environmental programs and enforce federal environmental laws under EPA oversight.

Last year EPA awarded over $25 million in grants to the four Pacific Southwest states (California, Arizona, Nevada, and Hawaii) for their air pollution regulatory programs, over $17 million for the states' polluted runoff control programs, and over $11 million to 123 Indian tribes in the Region for their environmental programs. EPA also loaned over $96 million to the four states to fund local governments' safe drinking water projects.

Last year the EPA's Pacific Southwest office also issued smaller grants for innovative community-based environmental projects through the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant program, and **grants to schools and colleges for environmental education** projects. In these grant programs, EPA awards grants through an open, competitive proposal process. Generally, these grants leverage matching funds from other sources, for maximum impact.

For more information on EPA grant programs, go to ***www.epa.gov/region09/funding***

EPA Sleuth Tracks Down Lab Contract Fraud

Steve Remaley, a chemist with EPA's Quality Assurance Office, keeps a watchful eye on laboratories that get lucrative government contracts to test soil, air, and water at environmental cleanup sites.

Since 1989, Remaley has played a key role in exposing 12 major cases of fraudulent lab work.

Typically, dishonest lab operators manipulate sample data or, even worse, report results without testing the samples at all, in order to pad profits and underbid competitors. Remaley's work has resulted in lab debarments (bans on government contracts), huge fines and even prison time for the wrongdoers.

If that sounds severe, consider this: Bogus lab results have wasted billions of taxpayer dollars on cleanups that need to be revisited, and put public health at risk.

Remaley's work has had a tremendous impact. Largely in response to his findings, federal agencies across the country have adopted tougher quality control procedures, and lab owners are more likely to think twice before faking data.

Steve regularly sends in his own pre-tested samples to gauge a lab's accuracy. He also does on-site lab audits to verify quality control procedures. If a lab submits a ridiculously low bid to win a contract, he sees a red flag. "If something seems too good to be true, it probably is," he says.

For his extraordinary service, Steve was awarded EPA's highest honor in 1997, the gold medal. But he shows no sign of slowing down.

He's now in the midst of an investigation that promises to be one of the biggest lab fraud cases in U.S. history, and he has a couple of leads on other suspicious labs. With Steve Remaley on the job, and others like him in EPA's ten regional offices, lab fraud doesn't pay. ☘

To report suspected cases of environmental lab fraud, contact Steve Remaley at (415) 744-1496 or remaley.steve@epa.gov